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SUBJECT: PROFESSOR HAN PARK ON HIS TRIP TO PYONGYANG

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Classified By: Ambassador Stephens. Reasons 1.4(b/d)

11. (C) Summary: In a July 13 office call, Professor Han S. Park briefed the Ambassador on his July 4-8 visit to Pyongyang during which he had lengthy discussions on the welfare of the two detained AMCITS and the Six-Party Talks. Park's principal interlocutors were the top three officials of the Asia-Pacific Peace Committee: KIM Young-guen, LI Jong-hyuk and WON Dong-yon. Regarding the two AMCIT journalists, North Korean officials conveyed that they were well, detained in a guest house in Pyongyang. Characterizing U.S.-DPRK relations as in a state of war, North Korean officials told Park that the journalists had committed hostile actions; they were like prisoners of war. POWs should be treated "humanely." If they are to be released, they should be "amnestied;" "humanitarian" release was not applicable, according to the Park's North Korean interlocutors. Park believed that the developments over the past few days, including the phone call from one of the detained journalists to a family member, and the Secretary's characterization of the detainees' remorse, were all positive signs. Park said he tried to steer the North Koreans away from thinking the USG would issue an official apology. Park's North Korean interlocutors were adamant that the Six-Party Talks were over. The North Koreans wanted direct bilateral talks with the United States; they were willing to tolerate multilateral talks, provided the Washington-Pyongyang negotiations were the centerpiece. The North Koreans told Park that they could still denuclearize as this was Kim Il-sung's wish, provided all of the Korean Peninsula was denuclearized. Park indicated he was organizing a seminar to be held in early October in the United States that would include scholars and political figures from North Korea, South Korea and the United States. End Summary.

Professor Park's Return

12. (C) University of Georgia Professor Han S. Park called on the Ambassador on July 13 to brief her on his July 4-8 visit to Pyongyang. On this trip Park spoke with KIM Young-guen (Chairman of Asia Pacific Peace Committee; this organization is in charge of inter-Korean relations), LI Jong-hyuk (Deputy Chairman of the APPC) and WON Dong-yon (Director General of the APPC). According to Park, Chairman Kim had frequent contacts with Kim Jong-il and DG Won had a "direct line" to the military. He also met with several unnamed scholars, who discussed with Park a range of issues, including succession and the "military first" policy.

AMCIT Journalists

13. (C) On the topic of the two detained journalists, Professor Park's estimation was that North Koreans were interested in seeing them released. APPC officials conveyed to Park that technically, the DPRK was still at war since no peace treaty was signed. This made the crossing of the DPRK border a "hostile act." Upon capture the journalists became POWs, who could not be released on humanitarian grounds. If they were to be released, it would have to be considered an amnesty and a "friendly gesture" to the American people, not a humanitarian act. However, the professor's contacts did stress that the journalists were being well-treated and that they were still being kept in a guest house in Pyongyang rather than in a prison or a labor camp. Park urged them to show more public signs that the journalists were well treated, to which his contacts responded that they did not know what more they could do. The journalists had been allowed phone calls, prompt delivery of medications sent from their families, and were cared for at the guest house instead of a prison.

14. (C) Park's APPC contacts also said that a special envoy could be helpful on the matter. Park said he downplayed to his interlocutors the possibility of an official USG apology but said the leadership seemed willing to accept an official delegation as long as it was not tied to the Six-Party Talks. Park noted that his interlocutors expressed surprise that no USG official inquiry had been made into direct negotiations for the journalists. Perhaps, whatever inquiries may have been made by the USG may have gone to less powerful organizations with no influence, Park guessed.

15. (C) Park said he felt that the Secretary's latest remarks and the journalists' expressed remorse were good signs. While the remarks alone may not get them released, it should have gotten their attention, helpful in finding a face saving way for the North Koreans.

No More Six-Party Talks

16. (C) Park's contacts were unanimous in insisting that the DPRK would not return to the Six-Party Talks. The leadership wanted direct, bilateral meetings with the United States. The DPRK would be willing to accept multilateral talks if specific issues called for it, but would not return to the same 6PT format with the same line up of countries. Park discussed some of the possible topics of these talks with his sources and they said it might include practical matters like trade, PSI, sanctions, disarmament and denuclearization.

Kim Jong-Il and Successful Succession

17. (C) Park assessed a different attitude among his North Korean interlocutors on succession. This was no longer a forbidden subject. To be sure, they would not openly discuss the topic, but they did not stop Park from painting various succession scenarios, even affirming them through body language. Through this type of communication, Park believed that his contacts were aware that KJI's third son, Jong-un, would succeed his father. In general, Park's interlocutors were not worried about a turbulent succession. His scholarly contacts believed that as long as the successor inherited Kim Il-sung's "thought, character and leadership," he would be able to lead the country. The new leader would "follow the manual" laid out by Kim Il-sung, and he would do well. In this context, Park's contacts opined that the DPRK still wanted a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, because Kim Il-sung himself wanted this.

18. (C) Park said that he had issued invitations to North Korean scholars for his "track 2" forum in the United States this coming October. South Korean invitees include former Prime Minister Han Myoung-sook and former National Assemblyman Yoon Yeo-joon. Park would also like to invite

State Department officials.
STEPHENS